

# The Orchid



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## *Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists*

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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



An over-wintering Northern Flicker using staghorn sumac as a food source.  
Photo taken in January by Cathy Douglas.

**Inside:** March Nature Almanac  
Results of Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count  
Tree Burls: Beauty in the Abnormal  
Book Review: Life on Earth  
Updated Atlas of Jack Lake

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## Welcome new PFN members!



- Matt Faris
- Mark Stewart
- Joelle Favreau
- Ross Fleming & Rose Kriedemann
- Ann MacLeod & Des Hickie
- Eugene Jankowski & Judith Pelley
- Buddy Myles
- Joleen Edmondson & Ben Gruhn
- Nicholas Weissflogg
- John Steven
- John Beamish
- Madhupreeta Muralidhar
- Judy & Peter Lawson
- Samm Medeiros & Reuben Noteboom
- Devon Turtscher



Clockwise from top: Beaver at Nephton on Dec. 31 (Dave Milsom), overwintering Blue Bird in January (Cathy Douglas), and sunrise over Lang-Hastings Trail at Keene Road (Steve Paul).



PFN Coming Events	
Dates and times to be announced	<p><b>Wildlife Tracking Outings</b></p> <p>PFN member, Don McLeod, will once again lead members on one or more outings during the months of December to March focusing on tracks and other wildlife sign. These outings will be scheduled when weather conditions permit. The place and time will be announced by e-mail shortly before each outing. Anyone interested in attending should send an e-mail to Don McLeod at donaldmcLeod.com@gmail.com so he can add you to an e-mail distribution list. If you signed up for previous outings, you would automatically receive an e-mail to confirm.</p> <p>Accessibility: Moderate to somewhat challenging. These outings will all involve walking in snowy conditions.</p> 
Dates and times to be announced	<p><b>Short Notice Nature Appreciation Walks</b></p> <p>With winter here, it is more difficult to find “topics” to offer for outings and to schedule very far in advance. Leaders will be approaching me when they have some time available and a destination in mind. If you are interested in joining others for nature walks, send me an e-mail and I will add your name to a list. You will be contacted when something is planned. The time and day of the week will change as will the location and degree of difficulty. When you are able to attend, just respond to the e-mail I send out. To register, e-mail sueparadisis@hotmail.com or call 705-559-2061</p>
<p>Sunday, Mar. 10</p> <p>10 a.m. to 2 p.m.</p> <p>20 participants</p>	<p><b>Returning Waterfowl on the Otonabee</b></p> <p>The spring migration gets underway with the lengthening days in March and increased hours of sunlight. This trip will visit various locations along the Otonabee River and possibly a bit further north, to find returning waterfowl and early spring migrants. It is anticipated there will be Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead doing their spring courtship rituals. Common Merganser, with the males in their bright spring plumage, will also be present. We can hope to see Trumpeter Swans and Bald Eagles along the river as well. Steve Paul and Laurie Healey will be leading this annual late winter outing. Bring binoculars and telescope if you have one. Dress for the weather forecast for the day of the outing. An afternoon break for lunch or a warm drink in Lakefield is planned. For further details and to register, contact Steve at stevepaul70@gmail.com after March 4.</p> <p>Accessibility: Easy</p>
<p>Wednesday, Mar. 27</p> <p>Doors open 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>AGM at 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Speaker at 8:15 p.m.</p>	<p><b>PFN Annual General Meeting</b></p> <p>Join us in-person for a social hour with old and new friends, including light refreshments and a cash bar. Have fun and help fundraise with our silent auction and bucket draws.</p> <p>The guest speaker will be John Feltham who will speak about community-based monitoring for wildlife conservation.</p>

PFN Coming Events	
<p>Peterborough Golf &amp; Country Club 1030 Armour Road</p>	<p>Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased on-line at <a href="http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/peterborough-field-naturalists/events/peterborough-field-naturalists-83rd-agm/">www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/peterborough-field-naturalists/events/peterborough-field-naturalists-83rd-agm/</a></p> <p>Note: The business and guest speaker portions will be available via Zoom at no charge.</p> <p>Please see last page for full advertisement.</p>
<p>Choice of two dates: April 13 or May 4 1 to 4 p.m. 15 participants</p>	<p><b>The Fascinating World of a Vernal Pool</b></p> <p>In the spring forest when vernal pools melt and fill with rain, life returns to these ephemeral wetlands. As soon as water appears, fairy shrimp hatch and are soon joined by hundreds of other organisms. These are the breeding grounds of wood frogs, spotted and blue-spotted salamanders and numerous other creatures. The salamanders migrate to the pools on the first warm, rainy night above 8 °C and generally stay in the pond a few weeks to mate. We will be checking a pool for the eggs of wood frogs, spotted and blue-spotted salamanders and for some of the many organisms that live and breed in these unique woodland ponds. Mark Williamson, of Trent University, will be bringing nets and trays for us to have a closer look at some of the invertebrates that are part of this fascinating ecosystem. We will also be listening for calling frogs and identifying some early spring wildflowers. Dress according to the weather and consider wearing rubber boots. To register for just one date and for more information on location, contact Sue after March 4 at <a href="mailto:sueparadisis@hotmail.com">sueparadisis@hotmail.com</a> or call 705-559-2061.</p> <p>Accessibility: Moderate with walking around woodland ponds</p> 
<p>Saturday, Apr. 20 7 to 9 p.m. 20 participants</p>	<p><b>Sounds of Spring</b></p> <p>The evening air of spring carries the mating songs of various species of frogs and the sky dance of the American Woodcock (a.k.a. Timberdoodle). On this two-hour evening walk, we will distinguish between the different species of calling frogs and listen to the courtship flights of the American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe in the provincially significant Cavan Swamp wetland. Contact Sue after March 4 at <a href="mailto:sueparadisis@hotmail.com">sueparadisis@hotmail.com</a> or 705-559-2061 to register and for further information.</p> <p>Accessibility: Easy, walking along a closed roadway</p> 
<p>Sunday, Apr. 21 8 to 11 a.m. 20 participants</p>	<p><b>Lang-Hastings Rail Trail – Part 1</b></p> <p>The Lang-Hastings Trail offers many chances to see nature up close and enjoy great views of the countryside south of Peterborough. Steve Paul will lead this walk on the Heritage Line to Nelson Road section, which crosses Indian River and runs alongside a pine forest and through meadow habitat. There will be opportunities to see and hear some returning spring birds including Eastern</p>

## PFN Coming Events

	<p>Meadowlark, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe and maybe even the local Ospreys returning to their nesting platform. The meeting location will be the carpool parking lot kitty-corner to the Country Style at Keene Rd/Hwy 7 intersection. Carpooling will be encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint driving to the trail start location. Be sure to bring your binoculars and dress for the weather of the day. Register by email to <a href="mailto:stevepaul70@gmail.com">stevepaul70@gmail.com</a>. Details on the meeting place will be sent when Steve confirms your spot.</p> <p>Accessibility: Easy 2.8 kms on a flat rail trail</p>
<p>Saturday, May 4 1 to 4 p.m. 15 participants</p>	<p><b>The Fascinating World of a Vernal Pool</b></p> <p>This is the second of two dates to visit the vernal pool. See description above for April 13. To register for this date and for more information on location, contact Sue after March 4 at <a href="mailto:sueparadisis@hotmail.com">sueparadisis@hotmail.com</a> or call 705-559-2061. Accessibility: Moderate with walking around woodland ponds.</p> 
<p>June 24 to 27 Silent Lake P.P.</p>	<p><b>PFN's Second Annual Camping Trip</b></p> <p>Silent Lake Provincial Park offers a quiet, non-motorized lake (Silent Lake) with a rocky shoreline, great canoeing &amp; kayaking, sandy beaches for swimming, scenic walking trails and mountain biking! Nature observations are plentiful and include birds, wildflowers, ferns, etc. Birders will be contributing to the Breeding Bird Atlas Count.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival: Monday, June 24 after 2 p.m.</li> <li>• Depart: Thursday, June 27 before 2 p.m.</li> <li>• Granite Ridge Campground</li> </ul> <p>Each member is responsible for booking their own campsite. You should book 5 months in advance to get a site (e.g., plan to make your booking on January 24 at 7 a.m.)</p> <p>Both tents and trailers (RVs) are welcome. This park also offers roofed accommodation (yurts and cabins) on site for rental. Visit the Ontario Parks Silent Lake website for information: <a href="https://www.ontarioparks.com/park/silentlake">https://www.ontarioparks.com/park/silentlake</a></p> <p>Reservations website: <a href="https://reservations.ontarioparks.com/">https://reservations.ontarioparks.com/</a></p> <p>Leaders: Colleen Lynch &amp; Don McLeod</p> <p>E-mail Colleen Lynch at <a href="mailto:clynch166@gmail.com">clynch166@gmail.com</a> or call /text Colleen at 705-868-4262 with your intention to attend and then you will be kept up to date on details and bookings. Accessibility: moderate</p>  
<p>Note: Most recordings of past PFN Zoom meetings can be viewed on PFN's YouTube channel at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAgbbqgr4ujZ16qba23LTQQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAgbbqgr4ujZ16qba23LTQQ</a> under the playlist menu.</p>	

## Other Events of Interest

<p>Tuesday, Mar. 12</p> <p>7:30 p.m. at the Publican House 294 Charlotte St.</p>	<p><b>Conservation Café: Dr. Jim Schaefer on Caribou</b></p> <p>Trent University's Conservation Café presentation series shares research about topics connected to conservation with the public. The Conservation Café typically takes place on the 2nd Tuesday of each month upstairs at The Publican House at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free, and all are welcome! Follow @TrentConserve on Twitter to stay up to date on all Conservation Café events.</p>
<p>Wednesday, Mar. 13</p> <p>7 to 8 p.m. Virtual webinar</p>	<p><b>KLT Webinar: Things That Go Peep in the Night</b></p> <p>Ontario's frogs live in a huge variety of ecosystems and have important roles in all of them – insect control, transferring energy around the ecosystem, not to mention the flurry of sounds they add to forests and wetlands every spring. Join Kawartha Land Trust and Blazing Star Environmental as we talk about the importance of frog diversity and conservation.</p> <p>To register, go to: <a href="https://kawarthalandtrust.org/event/webinar-things-that-go-peep-in-the-night/">https://kawarthalandtrust.org/event/webinar-things-that-go-peep-in-the-night/</a></p>
<p>Wednesday, Mar. 27</p> <p>5 to 7 p.m. Enwayaang Building, Room 114 Trent University</p>	<p><b>A Research Legacy: Dr. Nol will reflect on her remarkable ecological research career that has influenced the lives of so many Trent students</b></p> <p>Dr. Erica Nol has been a faculty member in the Biology Department at Trent for more than 35 years. She continues to maintain an active, externally funded research program in ornithology, teaching and training undergraduate and graduate students. She has received numerous accolades in her career, including a lifetime achievement award from the American Ornithological Association.</p> 
<p>May 24 to 26</p> <p>Friday to Sunday South Bruce Peninsula</p>	<p><b>SPNC Red Bay Weekend</b></p> <p>Limestone cliffs and sand beaches, hardwood forests and cedar swamps, fens and alvars, soaring cliffs and sandy beaches – this variety of ecosystems on the Bruce Peninsula makes it a special place to explore. The South Peel Naturalists' Club invites you to their annual Red Bay Weekend on the Bruce Peninsula. This is an opportunity to explore the Bruce with knowledgeable leaders, share time with fellow naturalists and enjoy accommodations on the shore of Lake Huron. Extending your stay before and/or after the weekend is an option. The cost for the weekend is \$20 per person for the registration fee to cover cost of bucket raffle prizes and lodging for our volunteer leaders - payable in advance by cheque or e-transfer to <a href="mailto:mail@spnc.ca">mail@spnc.ca</a> - plus SPNC Red Bay special rate \$143.74 per person/per night plus applicable taxes - minimum two nights - at Evergreen Resort, Mar, ON (includes all meals and snacks). Attendees must make reservations directly with Evergreen at <a href="mailto:reservations@evergreenresortredbay.ca">reservations@evergreenresortredbay.ca</a> or call 519 534 1868. Please confirm attendance for the weekend to SPNC at <a href="mailto:mail@spnc.ca">mail@spnc.ca</a> or the event host Audrey Oswald at 905 820 2571 / <a href="mailto:oswalda@sympatico.ca">oswalda@sympatico.ca</a></p> 

## Volunteer Corner



To encourage people to pay attention to biodiversity and to promote the City Nature Challenge and the PFN, we are planning to set up displays at the library, market, Ecology Park Plant sale and the Lindsay campus of Fleming College for their Birds and Nature Conservation event. We are looking for volunteers who like engaging with the public and sharing their passion for nature. The following dates are available:

March 11: Peterborough Public Library. Times to be determined.

April 4: Fleming College in Lindsay from 12 to 4 p.m.

April 22: Peterborough Public Library. Times to be determined.

April 26 to 27: Ecology Park for City Nature Challenge from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days.

May 18: Ecology Park Plant Sale. Times to be determined.

Please contact Sue at [sueparadisis@hotmail.com](mailto:sueparadisis@hotmail.com) if you are available any of these days.

We are also looking for nature artifacts to display on the table and attract attention. Fossils, fungi, feathers etc. If you have something to donate, please contact Sue at [sueparadisis@hotmail.com](mailto:sueparadisis@hotmail.com)

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## 2024 Membership Renewal

In early November 2023, the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) launched a new online registration system. Emails were sent to all members at that time, with a reminder to renew memberships for 2024. Thank you to those who have already renewed. If you are planning to attend the Annual Meeting on March 27, a valid 2024 PFN membership is required to vote.

If you have not yet renewed your 2024 PFN membership, please do so before the Annual Meeting by going to the PFN website Peterborough Field Naturalists ([peterboroughnature.org](http://peterboroughnature.org)) and clicking on "Membership" and then, "Join Online".

Payments of membership fees are accepted through Canada Helps, by e-transfer and by cheque.

In order to ensure that we have current and up to date information about our members, we require the application form to be filled out with each annual renewal. If you are unsure of your membership status, please contact us at [membership@peterboroughnature.org](mailto:membership@peterboroughnature.org) and our team will respond to you.

**Please note that after the Annual Meeting, *The Orchid* newsletter will only be sent to PFN members who have valid 2024 memberships.**

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## Added Attraction at the Annual General Meeting

Several months ago, Sarah Jamieson of the Biology Department at Trent University approached the PFN to see if we would be interested in seeing some posters her fourth-year Conservation Biology students were creating. As their instructor, Eden Porter, wrote, the students have been learning "how to share scientific information with the general public. For their final project, each student produces an infographic poster about a conservation issue they are passionate about, such as how to select native trees for planting, factors influencing salamander movements, and the damage caused by pet cats." We were happy to work with Sarah to find a way for our members to get to see the results and talk to the students about their project. We have arranged for a display in the corridor leading to our meeting room at the AGM. Take some time on your way into our social hour to chat with the students about their work.



## City Nature Challenge 2024

### Submitted by Sue Paradisis

Planning is underway for City Nature Challenge 2024 happening from April 27 to 29. This annual, global, community science competition is meant to document urban biodiversity. The challenge is a bioblitz that encourages residents and visitors to find and document plants, animals, and other organisms living in urban areas using iNaturalist. The goals are to engage the public in the collection of biodiversity data, with three awards each year for the cities that make the most observations, find the most species, and engage the most people. Most importantly, the event helps increase awareness and appreciation of the biodiversity around us.



This is the second year Peterborough will have participated. The biodiversity celebration will be centred at Ecology Park, Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. daily. Guided walks will be held at 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. each day. On Friday morning, Carlotta James will focus on pollinators, and in the afternoon ORCA staff will share their knowledge of Meade Creek history and ecology. On Saturday morning, Vern Bastable of Ecology Park, will lead a tour of the park and teach us about the trees that grow there. Drew Monkman will lead in the afternoon. Susan Chow will have children's activities on Saturday. Mayor Jeff Leal is challenging the Mayor of Kingston. Planning is ongoing and more information will follow.

#### Desired Outcomes:

- Provide educational opportunities to learn about nature within our city boundaries.
- Promote citizen science through participation in the City Nature Challenge.
- Educate participants in how to use iNaturalist.
- To catalog species within city boundaries to assist in the conservation of natural heritage.
- To introduce the public to Ecology Park and the PFN.
- To have FUN!!

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## Wetland Quiz

### Submitted by Steve Paul

Wetlands form a valued component of the City of Peterborough's natural areas and often coincide with the larger natural feature areas within the city. Mapped wetlands, including PSW (provincially significant wetland), non-PSW and unevaluated wetlands, cover approximately 618 ha within the City of Peterborough, accounting for 9% of the total area of the city. PSWs comprise approximately 261 ha and represent 42% of the total wetland coverage. However, as not all wetlands are mapped, and the boundaries of mapped wetlands do not always reflect current conditions, it is likely that these numbers are an underestimate of the total area of wetlands within the City.



The name of this wetland is given in the answers to the quiz. Photo: Steve Paul

How many provincially significant wetlands are there in City of Peterborough? How many can you name? What is the name of the wetland in the above photo? See page 25 for the answers.



## Outing Report: First Day Walk

Submitted by Anne Elliot

New Year's Day 2024 was made memorable by the PFN's 'First Day Walk' at Petroglyphs Provincial Park, on Northeys Bay Road, just north of Upper Stony Lake. Sixteen members met to walk together from the gate to McGinnis Lake. The lack of snow (just a thin sprinkling) meant that we were able to fully appreciate the colourful and interesting life that often lies hidden through the winter: mosses, lichens and fungi. Bright green mosses on rocks



Photo: Don McLeod



Orange Jelly Spot fungus. Photo: Don McLeod

and fallen trees were vivid, even on a dull day. One of the stand-out colours came from the Orange Jelly Spot fungus, *Dacrymyces chrysospermus* which grows on downed pine and hemlock trees and is known in folklore as 'orange witches' butter'. Another star was a Many-fruited Pelt Lichen, *Peltigera polydactylon*, its tiny white fruiting bodies standing proudly in the absence of snow. We admired the height of the red and white pines and the rich red-brown colour of the needles covering the ground beneath.

Our destination was McGinnis Lake, a rare meromictic lake with layers of water that don't intermix and so appear in distinct turquoise and green colours. A thin layer of ice

covered the lake on the day of our outing, so we couldn't fully appreciate this feature but we did enjoy a group photo and refreshment break.

Birds - like the snow - were notable for their absence. Three ravens flew overhead but even Black-capped Chickadees only showed up when our walk leader, Sue Paradisis, played a recording of a screech owl being mobbed by chickadees and four came to see what the commotion was.

This technique of attracting birds was only used once on our outing as we respected the fact that birds need to retain their energy for surviving through the cold winter rather than expending it in giving us a show. One Hairy Woodpecker was spotted and a Red-breasted Nuthatch was heard, completing our list of just four bird species. A final highlight was seeing the beautifully intricate nest of a Red-eyed Vireo in the fork of a branch about 5 feet above the ground.

The forest was quietly beautiful and it was wonderful to start the new year in the company of a friendly group of nature lovers. We look forward to many more PFN outings in 2024.



Multi-fruited Pelt Lichen. Photo: Don McLeod

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## Outing Report: Jan. 27 Short Notice Walk

Submitted by Sharon Hill

On the morning of Saturday, January 27, Pat Kramer shared the joys of one of his local hiking routes with six of us. After meeting behind the Kawartha Credit Union, we spent a delightful two plus hours hiking north along the east side of the river, starting at Hunter Street. From there we followed the riverbed through the snowy woods until reaching Turtle Island near the London Street Bridge/Hazlitt Street. While walking along the river, a Bald Eagle flew by low and then we saw a raccoon cross some ice and climb up a tree where he disappeared. We had a possible Hermit Thrush but couldn't confirm it; we even tried playback

but the bird didn't respond. However, we did spot chickadees, a Kingfisher who had caught something in the river and 2 Common Goldeneyes under the Parkhill Bridge. Our path took us to the warm spring area which was quiet today, and then we crossed an iced-over Curtis Creek and headed up to Rotary Park just below the London Street Dam. We then continued north along the top edge of the floodplain past the dam. Above the dam, the river is nearly completely frozen until about Parkhill Road. Turtle Island was fairly quiet but just inland of the island we caught up to a mixed species flock of Cedar Waxwings, American Robins, a few chickadees and a White-breasted Nuthatch.



A raccoon by the river. Photo: Sharon Hill

Walking back along the Rotary Trail we spotted a few more birds, such as Dark-eyed Juncos and Mourning Doves. And there was the squirrel. He was climbing a pole that had a substantial hole dug into it. Sure enough, it popped into the hole, and when Cathy knocked on the base of the pole it poked its head out. Everyone enjoyed the like-minded company, sharing birding stories and the pleasure of discovering "Pat's route". We felt fortunate that he shared it along with his enthusiasm and knowledge. Thanks Pat!



Eastern grey squirrel photo by Sharon Hill

The weather was good for January, with temps at 0 to 1 °C. Some early mist soon cleared. With no wind, the snow soft and quiet for walking, and the trail in good condition we could hear the birds easily. Thank you, Cathy, for keeping the list of birds, which can be sourced at: [ebird.org/checklist/S159928751](http://ebird.org/checklist/S159928751)

## Outing Report: World Wetland Day on the Lang-Hastings Trail

Submitted by Steve Paul

On February 2, Sue Paradis and I hosted a walk in celebration of World Wetland Day, on the Lang-Hastings Trail between Technology Drive and Keene Road. There were 20 people in total. We had mostly cloudy skies with temperatures around 3 °C, which was comfortable for the walk but of course warmer than what February should feel like. About half the group had never walked this trail before. It was nice to share the beauty along the trail I get to see every day.



Photo: Steve Paul

My wife, Laurie, and I have lived in this area near the trail for almost 27 years, and while doing some research for this walk, I realized that I never knew if the wetland I walk through every day had an "official" name. It was great to find out that it does. (Please see my quiz in this month's *Orchid* "How Many Provincially Significant Wetlands are there in City of Peterborough?" for the answer). Sharing how important these wetlands are to our ecosystem made this walk even more special.





Virginia Ctenucha moth caterpillar on the trail.  
Photo: Sandy Garvey

Highlights of the walk included sharing the large trail map showing all access points along the entire 33 km trail; Sue pointing out the beautiful winter interest from the male and female catkins hanging on various Speckled Alders that are growing right along the trail; the spot where I had my awe-inspiring encounter with a cow Moose last July; looking at various footprints in the snow with guidance from our tracking expert Don McLeod; and the beautiful forest in the middle that separates the two wetlands, and how the combination provides suitable habitat allowing many birds and wildlife to thrive. In the surprise of the day, Sandy Garvey and Martha Lawrence came across a Virginia Ctenucha moth caterpillar walking along the trail.

## Outing Report: Feb. 20 Wildlife Tracking

### Submitted by Sharon Hill

Tuesday, February 20 was a perfect winter day: bright sun, fresh snow, cold but not bitter. And the best part was four of us joined expert tracker, Don McLeod on a trek through Camp Kawartha Environment Centre (CKEC). Perhaps because just a few days had passed since the last significant snowfall, there was good evidence of a lot of animal traffic through the woods. Thanks to Don, we identified the presence of Coyotes, and likewise saw lots of Red Fox tracks – and learned how to distinguish between the two. A treat was seeing an old Porcupine nest, complete with Porcupine, in the trunk of a huge



Porcupine in its tree den. Photo: Don McLeod



Evidence of debarking and tree tapping by Red Squirrel. Photo: Don McLeod

old dead tree. It was off the beaten path and it was only thanks to one of the trekkers that we saw it. Feeling conflicted, about tramping up to the poor alarmed Porcupine's den, we kept our distance and moved on. But elsewhere we did also see the Porcupine's distinct track – wide and lumbering from side to side. Just as exciting was seeing evidence of American Mink, Ermine and Ruffed Grouse. At the smaller end of the mammals, Red Squirrels were evident in the conifer areas of the woods and Eastern Grey Squirrels in the deciduous areas; lots of Eastern Cottontail tracks everywhere, and shrew and mouse tracks. Near the CKEC building there were numerous shrubs and trees severely damaged by browse and debarking from Eastern Cottontail. Evidence of debarking and tapping by Red Squirrel was also observed.

When we raised our eyes and/or listened, we saw/heard Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal, Cedar Waxwing and American Crow. The Wednesday group, which did a similar hike, observed a pair of Common Ravens performing a courtship dance in the sky!

It was a wonderful morning and, as I drove away, I imagined being the proverbial fly on a wall during the night to watch all the comings and goings of the woodland denizens. Thanks Don, for such a wonderful outing; oh, and to all the animals and birds too.



## Junior Naturalists' Report: Nature Journaling Workshop

Submitted by Shelley King

Saturday, January 27 was a day of nature journaling for the Junior Naturalists. Twelve children, with their parents/grandparents, gathered at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre. PFN member, Jennifer Lennie, led us through some outdoor activities to transform the group into "Nature Detectives" by honing our observation skills of the finer details of our natural surroundings. The juniors collected seeds, leaves, twigs, rocks, feathers, lichen, moss and other natural treasures to bring inside for closer inspection. Following a discussion of the various ways to use a nature journal, the Juniors received a simple notebook with blank pages to transform into their own unique nature journal. After some very focussed time to sketch and document with a variety of art materials, reflections and discoveries were shared by the group.



Photos: Shelley King

## Junior Naturalists' Report: Wildlife Tracking

Submitted by Jennifer Lennie

There was plenty for the Juniors to explore on our wildlife tracking event with Don McLeod on February 18th. A decent amount of snow came down two days before our outing, allowing plenty of fresh tracks to be clearly visible. The group consisted of four Juniors and five adults. We found the tracks of Red Squirrel, Eastern Gray Squirrel, Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Cottontail, and Red Fox. We also came across a large set of clear bird tracks, likely Dark-eyed Juncos who had been enjoying the bird feeders.



Photo: Don McLeod



Left: Purposeful, straight track of Red Fox. Photo: Jennifer Lennie. Right: Tracks of Ruffed Grouse. Photo: Don McLeod

Browse marks and nipped buds were seen on several shrubs and trees made by Eastern Cottontails. Another interesting discovery was some urine marking by the Red Fox who had crisscrossed the trail. Other birds observed by the feeder were Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, American Tree Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, and Mourning Dove. Meandering along the trails surrounding Camp Kawartha's Environment Centre was a fun way to spend our Sunday morning, and everyone learned plenty of tips and tricks for deciphering the clues animals leave behind.

## Tree Burls: Beauty in the Abnormal

Submitted by Jason and Lou Smyrlis

Deep in our woods, near the foot of a grassy knoll that has provided for more than a few delicious naps in the shade over summers past, grows the “cancer tree”. It’s the shortest, least robust looking of four white cedars situated within about 15 metres of each other. On its left side, at about chest height, it bears an abnormal looking growth consisting of several tumor-like knots protruding from its trunk. It has borne this bulbous deformity, which led to it being dubbed the cancer tree, for the quarter century we’ve been hiking by it. Yet, despite this knotty growth, the white cedar continues to grow, competing with its neighbors for sunlight in the crowded canopy. It’s topping 12 metres (about 40 feet) now.

We’ve observed similar growths on both coniferous and deciduous trees on many of our hikes in the Kawarthas, yet there is no uniformity to their appearance. It made us wonder what causes these growths and what they’re doing to the trees encumbered with them.

The growths are called burls and can grow over a period of decades on tree trunks, major branches and the root crown. They range from fist size to gigantic proportions that can encircle the entire tree trunk.

Burls form when bud growth cells develop in an abnormal way. Every tree is constantly forming buds from which new branches can grow. But, in the case of burl formation, this mechanism goes awry. Instead of dormant buds expanding into straight shoots, they grow inward, twisting and turning under the bark and never emerging as branches. Eventually they break through the bark as knot-like growths, continuing to grow as the tree matures.

Although there are several explanations for what gives rise to this abnormality, it remains shrouded in a fair bit of mystery. What is known is that burls are indications of a tree having undergone some form of stress with its hormones disrupted, and sometimes hijacked, by some other organism – a virus, fungus or bacterium. The crown gall bacterium, for example, invades the tree’s genetics with DNA which prompts the tree to make special amino acids and growth regulators which form the burl, providing preferred habitat for the bacterium and a wealth of nutrients.

Burls can also be a response to environmental stress, insect invasion, or a physical injury to the tree. There is also speculation that some are caused by a genetic anomaly, much the same way we grow moles on our skin.

Ugly on the outside, burls are magnificent on the inside. Instead of the normal straight wood grain, a burl’s grain is full of waves and swirls and perhaps some “eyes”. Each burl’s design is unique.

Nor do burls seem to do much harm or shorten a tree’s life. They form in the xylem layer between the outer bark and the heartwood but, though they cause the xylem to become twisted and contorted, it still seems to be able to carry on its job of transporting water and minerals up to the leaves. In fact, removing the burl can often prove more harmful than helpful to the tree.



Burls, such as this bulbous growth on a white cedar, can grow to gigantic proportions but they don’t do much harm or shorten a tree’s life. Photo: Lou Smyrlis



## Nature Almanac for March

By Drew Monkman

*Excerpts from winter almanacs originally published in the Peterborough Examiner*

The pattern in which the buds are arranged on the twigs of deciduous trees and shrubs is a useful tool for winter identification. Honeysuckles, ashes, maples, lilacs, viburnums, elderberries, and dogwoods all have opposite buds. To remember them, use the mnemonic HAM LIVED (LI = lilac). The buds of nearly all other tree species are alternate.

The furry catkins of pussy willows and aspens poke through bud scales and become a time-honoured sign of spring's imminent arrival.

Chipmunks make their first appearance above ground since late fall. They are somewhat active all winter, however, making repeated trips to their underground storehouses for food.

By mid-March, the first northward-bound turkey vultures are usually seen. The first songbirds, too, usually return by mid-month. In the city, the most notable new arrivals are robins and grackles. In rural areas, watch for red-winged blackbirds perched high in wetland trees.



Tree bud mnemonic. Photo: Drew Monkman

and Campground, Pengelly Landing on Rice Lake and the field just south of County Road 2 at Mather's Corners.

Sandhill cranes return to the Kawarthas in late March and can sometimes be seen performing their courtship dance. It includes head bobbing, bowing, and leaping into the air. Douro Third Line is sometimes a good place to see these birds.

Tuesday, March 19, marks the spring equinox. At 11:06 p.m. EDT, the sun will cross directly over the Earth's equator. For the next six months, we can enjoy days that are longer than nights. On this date, both the moon and sun rise due east and set due west.

No other season offers as many bright stars and constellations as spring. There are no less than 11 first-magnitude stars visible. Ruling over the southeastern sky, the season's signature constellation is Leo.



Chipmunk under bird feeder in March. Photo: Drew Monkman

For anyone paying attention, the increase in bird song is hard to miss. If you don't already know the voices of common songsters, late winter is a great time to start learning them. [Allaboutbirds.org](http://Allaboutbirds.org) is a good resource. Better still, get the free Merlin app. It now has a feature that provides immediate identification as a bird sings.

Duck numbers increase as buffleheads and hooded mergansers start arriving. Open sections of local lakes and rivers are host to thousands of ducks of up to a dozen species. Some good locations to observe them include Little Lake, Lakefield Park



## Correction Notice



Photo of Snow Fleas/Springtails (*Hypogastrura nivicola*) from BugGuide. (Copyright © 2019 Tom Murray)

In the Jan/Feb 2024 issue of *The Orchid*, the photo that was used for a snow flea on page 15 was actually a snow scorpionfly. A photo of actual snow fleas is shown on the left. On the right is the photo that was published in error, now corrected in the caption. Erin McGauley wrote, "Like snow fleas, snow scorpionflies are also winter-active insects. They have an elongated head that gives them a 'nose' like Gonzo from the Muppets. Snow scorpionflies are associated with mossy habitats (their food source), and last year I found one for the first time while strolling along the edge of Jackson Creek on the Trans Canada Trail."

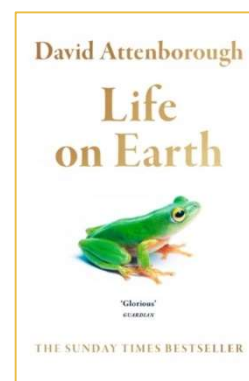


Snow scorpionfly (*Boreus* spp.) Photo by Pfhewi (Wikimedia Commons)

## Book Review: Life on Earth by David Attenborough

Submitted by Marilyn Freeman

David Attenborough's book *Life on Earth* was first published on Darwin's 170<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 2019, *Life on Earth* was updated and reissued as a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition – and it's wonderfully rich. The book was updated because we've developed more sophisticated technology to interpret what we've already documented. Now the book is much more complete in its coverage of biodiversity, mass extinctions and why birds are truly dinosaurs. Modern science has helped to flesh out underlying genomes, DNA and evolutionary changes.



It all starts in the sea with single celled organisms, or more specifically, LUCA – Last Universal Common Ancestor – that lived about 4 billion years ago. Four billion is a difficult number to get our heads around so Attenborough suggests we think about a calendar spanning one year. Each day represents roughly 10 billion years. January is home to bacteria. Algae-like organisms appear around early August. (They are found in Gunflint fossils in north Minnesota & Northwestern Ontario on the shores of Lake Superior). In the Grand Canyon, old worm fossil trails date to the 2nd week in November while the first fish appeared a week later. Mid-December saw a little lizard scuttle across a beach. Humans didn't appear until December 31. Sometime in the 'early summer' of this calendar, bacteria developed the ability to manufacture their own food within their cell walls by drawing the energy they needed from the sun – photosynthesis. Some of these bacteria still exist in places that are still like the early days on Earth. The hydrogen-rich Paint Pots of Yellowstone National Park are one such location. Algae developed the ability to extract hydrogen from water leaving oxygen. Blue-green algae produced the oxygen which eventually accumulated in our atmosphere – a turning point for future life on earth.

From single celled organisms, Attenborough continues on to explain how bodies were built, how forests developed and what organisms came to dominate where. Insects were the first creatures to colonize the air. Flowers, perfumed and full of colour and shapes, bloomed long before there were humans. They evolved in order to appeal to insects who could see colour and had a delicate sense of smell.

While insects come in a seemingly infinite variety of shapes, they're all small. Why? It comes down to their breathing technique - gaseous diffusion - a system that works well over short distances but becomes very

inefficient over longer ones. However, many insects overcome their small size by communal living and strict jobs that support the entire colony. In other words, they become one super organism.

Three-quarters of the Earth is water. It follows, then, that three-quarters of the world belong to fish. About 450 million years ago, a split appeared in the fish dynasty. A set of genes in one group of fish duplicated, which eventually led to the development of a spine. This ancient split means that you and I are more closely related to a cod than a cod is to a shark!

About 375 million years ago, fish began to haul themselves out of the water. They encountered two problems: moving and breathing. The next evolutionary step required a watertight skin and a watertight egg.

Further along the evolutionary timeline came the development of a placenta. This was one of the crucial factors in the ultimate success of mammalian colonization of the world because the young are born more developed. Moving out of trees and into daylight led to the development of grasping hands, long arms, stereoscopic colour vision and increased brain size in primates. The enlarged brain led to learning, the manufacturing of tools and the beginnings of group culture.

This is not to suggest that humans are any sort of apex because "species are not eternal". We are part of a web of life. And when we destroy what we depend upon for life, we destroy ourselves. This new edition of *Life on Earth* is light on the climate crisis. The "anthropocene" is not mentioned. However, *Life on Earth* will definitely open the eyes of a new generation of readers to the wonders of our planet. Hopefully, it will inspire them to care for it as well. As Attenborough writes, "We are now by far the most powerful single species that has ever existed on earth. That power brings great responsibility. It is now up to us to care for the planet and for all the other creatures for whom it is home."

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## Updated Atlas of Jack Lake Fauna

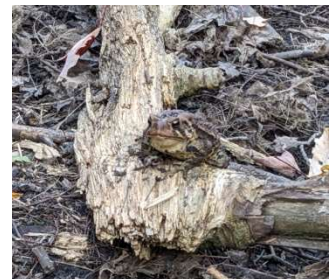
### Submitted by Steven Kerr

The Peterborough Field Naturalists have recently received a copy of *Fauna of the Jack Lake Watershed* dated December 2023. The project, coordinated by PFN member Steven Kerr, was initiated in 2013 and is updated annually.

This compilation has been prepared to assemble and consolidate information on the fauna of Jack Lake and its watershed. Baseline information has been obtained from published books which delineate the distribution of various amphibians, birds, crustaceans, fishes, insects, mammals, molluscs, and reptiles. Additional information has been derived from the Jack Lake Strategic Plan, MNR records, the Ontario Herpetofaunal Atlas, the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, and reported observations by Jack Lake residents and members of the Peterborough Field Naturalists. Information from the annual PFN Christmas Bird Count and butterfly surveys are included. Drew Monkman, Martin Parker, and Bob Bowles have also provided additional information from their records and archives.

It is hoped that this information can be used to monitor the quality of the Jack Lake ecosystem and prevent harmful alteration or destruction of habitat by land-based activities such as shoreline development and resource extraction activities such as quarrying and logging.

To date, 4,666 records involving a total of 557 species have been documented as of December 2023. Thirty-eight organisms designated as species at risk have been identified in the Jack Lake area (Table 1). To date, a total of 298 local (Jack Lake) individuals have contributed information to this atlas.



American Toad. Photo: Julia Szabo

Table 1: Observations and records of fauna from the Jack Lake watershed (effective to December 2023)

Fauna	# Species Documented (# Species at Risk)	# Records/Sightings
Amphibians	21 (1)	232
Birds	191 (23)	2,450
Crustaceans	9 (0)	9
Fish	23 (0)	180
Insects (Terrestrial)	156 (2)	932
Insects (Aquatic)	40 (0)	77
Mammals	53 (3)	377
Molluscs	14 (0)	27
Plankton	20 (0)	22
Reptiles	16 (9)	340
Worms and Misc. Invertebrates	14 (0)	19
<b>Summary</b>	<b>557 (38)</b>	<b>4,666</b>

While the listing of some species (e.g., birds, fishes and reptiles) may be relatively comprehensive, other groups (e.g., insects and molluscs) have not been adequately sampled and will require more intensive efforts in the future. The program will be continued again in 2024.

The lengthy document may be viewed on the Jack Lake Association website:

[www.jackslakeassociation.ca/assets/conservation/Atlas/Atlas%20of%20Jack%20Lake%20Fauna%202023.pdf](http://www.jackslakeassociation.ca/assets/conservation/Atlas/Atlas%20of%20Jack%20Lake%20Fauna%202023.pdf)

Please contact Steve at [stevenkerr264@outlook.com](mailto:stevenkerr264@outlook.com) if you have information to contribute to the Atlas in 2024.

## Bird Friendly Buildings - Architects Are Starting to Pay Attention

Submitted by Marilyn Freeman

As naturalists and birders, we are all too aware of the avian carnage created by tall glass buildings during migration and especially in large cities that are on flyways such as New York and Chicago. In Canada, window collisions kill 16 to 42 million birds a year. In the United States, collisions kill up to one billion birds per year.

Before the 1960s, much of the large sheet glass used in buildings was made via a process of casting and polishing. The glass often contained bubbles or other imperfections that obscured its clarity and was therefore more bird friendly. In the 1960s, float glass became widely available. This glass was completely smooth and much more reflective. As time went on, builders installed double-paned glass, which, while better for energy conservation, made the glass even more reflective. In other words, this “advance” in technology had a very big effect on birds.

More recently, architects have started to pay attention to all the killing. The amount of glass has begun to be reduced and the rest replaced with “fritted glass”. This glass has a pattern baked in that is composed of ceramic dots that are barely perceptible to humans but evident to birds. Fritted glass also has the benefit of reducing solar gain thus keeping buildings cooler.



Example of AviProtek® bird-friendly glass with a discrete grid of white dots



Last year an assistant professor in building technology at the Carnegie Mellon School of Architecture produced an open-source book of 50 glass patterns that are bird friendly. The professor, Azadeh Omidfar Sawyer, wanted this resource to be readily available to architects.

Of course, many of our new structures are made by builders, not architects. Fortunately, some builders have been experimenting with UV-printed patterns, invisible to humans and evident to birds. In some areas, this type of bird friendly glass is being complemented by living roofs and walls that incorporate niches for nest building. Screens or grates that cut solar gain are also being employed.

Architects tend to be a creative bunch. Builders a little less so but if these bird friendly modifications get talked about widely enough there will be change and some of the killing can be abated.

Unity Design Studio, formerly Lett Architects, are using bird-friendly glass where they have large expanses of glazing. Two current local projects using it are the new Fire Station #2 and the Canadian Canoe Museum. For photos of what bird friendly glass looks like, check out this website:

<https://www.walkerglass.com/products/bird-friendly-glass-solution/>

Written with help from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/27/birds-buildings-collisions-architecture>

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## Results of Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count

**By Colin Jones, Count Compiler**

The 38th Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count was held on Tuesday, January 2. It was an overcast day with slightly windy conditions (picking up as the day progressed) with temperatures hovering around 0 °C. Unlike most years, there was virtually no snow on the ground. Lakes, such as Stoney Lake and Jack Lake, were mostly open this year, resulting in some waterbirds, including three species new to the count.

Overall, it was fairly quiet day as there was little natural food and we had to work hard to detect the birds (lots of pishing, squeaking and owl calls to draw the birds in). Typical overwintering species were at about the 10-year average numbers. This included species such as Ruffed Grouse, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper.

Total species: 38 (quite a bit higher than the 10-year average of 33 but below the record of 41)

Total individual birds: 2,607 (10-year average is 2,443)

### Notable Species and Numbers:

- *Mallard*: 27 (2nd time on the count)
- *White-winged Scoter*: 1 (new for the count - on Stoney Lake)
- *Common Merganser*: 108 (7th time on the count - on both Stoney and Jack Lake)
- *Red-breasted Merganser*: 1 (new for the count - on Stoney Lake)
- *Herring Gull*: 7 (near the count high of 8)
- *Great Blue Heron*: 1 (new for the count - although it had been recorded in count week previously)
- *Golden Eagle*: 2 (near the count high of 3)
- *Sharp-shinned Hawk*: 2 (7th time on the count; new count high)
- *American Crow*: 15 (near the count high of 20)
- *Bohemian Waxwing*: 79 (high count)

### Low Counts:

- *Downy Woodpecker*: 14 (much lower than the 10-year average of 34)
- *Hairy Woodpecker*: 29 (lower than the 10-year average of 48)

- *Pileated Woodpecker*: 7 (much lower than the 10-year average of 21)
- *White-breasted Nuthatch*: 100 (lower than the 10-year average of 134)

**Winter Finches:**

- *Purple Finch*: 39
- *Common Redpoll*: 42
- *Red Crossbill*: 9
- *Pine Siskin*: 196
- *American Goldfinch*: 238

**Misses:**

- *Black-backed Woodpecker*: once an annually detected species, this species has only been recorded on 4 counts since 2009
- *Canada Jay*: Similar to the above species, this was once an annual species but has only been recorded 4 times since 2009.

Count week-only birds included: *Trumpeter Swan* (new), *Winter Wren* and *American Robin*.

The count circle (including the 6 areas) can be viewed at the following link:

<https://maps.google.ca/maps/ms?msid=217208700112631695001.0004d125bfd0d20adc5de&msa=0&ll=44.660839,-77.950058&spn=0.2525,0.676346>

Thanks to all 30 participants!

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**Steve's Swan Sightings****Submitted by Steve Paul**

With the mild winter we have had, local Trumpeter Swan numbers are definitely higher than in past years. This is likely due to a combination of their increasing population as well as lots of open water on our local rivers for them to feed. Many people think that Trumpeter Swans fly south for the winter. I guess that depends on your idea of what "south" is. Trumpeter Swans do not fly to tropical destinations. They usually only fly as far south as they need to. Although a few do cross the border into the United States each winter, the largest overwintering population is normally at LaSalle beach in Burlington, with smaller populations all along the Lake Ontario shoreline, Washago at the north end of Lake Simcoe, Big Bob Channel near Bobcaygeon, and locally along both the Otonabee and Trent Rivers.

In looking at the numbers I provided in the March 2023 *Orchid*, I had personally counted 32 Trumpeters along the Trent River, and 45 at one spot on the Crowe River near Marmora. This winter, Lynn Gapes reported a high count of 78 on the Crowe River, and the collective numbers along the Trent River have been somewhere around 40 to 50. Along the Otonabee River, I believe the high count was 12 seen near Lock 25 or around the Lakefield waterfront. This group included the pair of X66 Sadie and her untagged, unbanded (UTUB) mate Chip, who did not raise any cygnets in 2023. We have had one local UTUB pair around Peterborough all winter, seen quite often near Auburn Reach or on Little Lake.

Between February 4 and 10, I received two different reports of Trumpeters possibly having hooks in their mouths. In both cases, we could not confirm whether they were hooks or just grass sticking out of their bill after feeding. With the local swans on Little Lake, lots of people were photographing the pair. Looking at



An untagged, unbanded pair of Trumpeter Swans on Little Lake on Feb. 6.  
Photo: Laurie Healey

many photos I couldn't find anything sticking out. If you think you have a swan with an issue, first take a look at their behaviour. Are they isolating themselves from other swans? Are they acting differently? Are they tipping up (bum in the air) trying to feed normally? Do they look upright and alert or more lethargic with signs of head shaking or mouth gaping? When in doubt, take *a lot* of photos, and record everything you see. Swans that are struggling or acting differently could definitely have issues with lead poisoning or entanglement with fishing line. When a Trumpeter is suspected of being in trouble, we still need to assess the health of the swan through observation, as well as survey the surrounding area to come up with a rescue plan. Any Trumpeter that can swim or fly is virtually impossible to capture when there is a lot of water around. Even if we can capture it, it should go to a wildlife rehabilitation centre like Shades of Hope (around 1 hour away) for assessment and/or treatment. Please continue to reach out to me with your photos and observations if you suspect something is wrong, and we will sort through all of the details together.

*Editor's note: Did you know that injured wild animals do not belong at a humane society or animal control but stand their best chances with a licenced wildlife rescue? Find out more about wildlife rescues and find one close to you at Ontario Wildlife Rescue. <https://www.ontariowildliferescue.ca>*

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## **From the Archives - Historic Bird Records**

### **Prepared by Martin Parker**

The PFN Archives, since its creation in about 1970, contains a variety of documents and reports dealing with various aspects of nature in the Peterborough region. The following is a summary of the reports on file which deal with the status of our bird populations.

*A Checklist of the Birds of Peterborough County* compiled by J. K. McKeever, 1958. The oldest report which summarizes known observations to date of publication. Also contains written notes which update the status of various species.

*Birds of the Peterborough Areas & Their Seasonal Movements* by Doug Sadler, circa 1964. A summary of known species along with information on time of occurrence.

*Field Checking List* (1965). A card published by the Peterborough Nature Club (former name of PFN) which contains the list of the 248 species recorded in Peterborough County at time of publishing

*Birds of the Peterborough Area and Their Seasonal Movements*, by Doug Sadler, 1968. Revision of previous summary.

*Birds of the Peterborough Area* by Doug Sadler, 1973. A joint publication of the Peterborough Field Naturalists and Peterborough County Board of Education.

*Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas* by Doug Sadler, 1983. An updated summary of the status of our birds and published as a book by the PFN under Orchid Press.

*1998 Peterborough County Natural History Summary*, March 1999 by Peter S. Burke, Colin D. Jones, Jennifer M. Line, Michael Oldham, Peter J. Sorrill, published jointly by the Peterborough Field Naturalists, Natural Heritage Information Centre, and Trent University. Contains a summary of the birds observed in the 1998 calendar year also with information on other animals and plants.

The Archives also contains the records of the Peterborough Christmas Bird Count and the other counts which have been held in the region since 1905. Collectively these reports provide valuable information on our birds. It should be noted that as of February 2024, the number of species of birds reported in Peterborough County on eBird is 309 - a significant increase from the 248 reported on the checklist in circa 1965.





## The Orchid Diary



A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in Peterborough County. Information compiled from eBird's rare bird sightings, Drew Monkman's Sightings website and individual submissions. Please submit your interesting observations to [orchiddiary@peterboroughnature.org](mailto:orchiddiary@peterboroughnature.org)

Dec. 21	<p>Matt Garvin saw a late <b>Common Loon</b> on lower Chemong Lake.</p> <p>The <b>Eastern Towhee</b> at Jeff Stewart's feeder in Millbrook was seen and continued through to February 2024, with a short but worrying absence in mid-January.</p>
Dec. 22	<p>Two <b>Cackling Geese</b> were spotted by Cathy Douglas with a flock of Canada Geese in Auburn Park.</p> <p>Laurie Healey and Steve Paul continued to see the <b>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</b> at their backyard feeders on Keene Rd. until early January, when it disappeared.</p> <p>A <b>River Otter</b> was seen by Enid Mallory on Lily Lake.</p>
Dec. 25	<p>A flock of at least 14 <b>Bonaparte's Gulls</b> were seen in Rice Lake from Hiawatha First Nation by Scott Gibson.</p>
Dec. 26	<p>Matthew Toby saw 2 adult and 1 immature <b>Tundra Swans</b> at the Irish Line boat launch on Chemong Lake.</p> <p>A female <b>Wood Duck</b> was observed on the Lakefield Sewage Lagoons by Don Sutherland.</p> <p>Jake Nafziger saw a <b>Gadwall</b> and 3 <b>Red-breasted Mergansers</b> at Hall Landing, Rice Lake, and another 3 <b>Red-breasted Mergansers</b> on Little Lake.</p> <p>Cathy Douglas saw and heard a <b>Hermit Thrush</b> at the Otonabee Gravel Pit.</p>
Dec. 27	<p>A male <b>Red-winged Blackbird</b> was seen by Angela Mattos in her backyard in Douro.</p> <p>Reem Ali saw an <b>American Kestrel</b> at the Peterborough Airport.</p>
Dec. 28	<p>While checking out the <b>Tundra Swans</b> on Irish Line, Selwyn, Cathy Douglas also spotted a <b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>.</p> <p>Colin Bowers noticed a pair of <b>Common Loons</b> swimming and diving on Chandos Lake.</p>
Dec. 29	<p>Angela Mattos detected a <b>Northern Saw-whet Owl</b> in her Douro backyard.</p>
Jan. 1	<p>A female <b>Ruddy Duck</b> was first spotted by Scott Gibson at Pengelly Landing.</p> <p>Angela Mattos noticed a <b>Golden Eagle</b> flying over her yard in Douro.</p> <p>Reem Ali observed an <b>American Kestrel</b>, a <b>Red-tailed Hawk</b> and a <b>Coyote</b> at the Peterborough Airport. Reem noted another <b>Red-tailed Hawk</b> on Crowley Ln, a <b>Common Goldeneye</b> on Little Lake, and another pair at Lock 22 on Otonabee River.</p>
<b>Red-breasted Mergansers</b>	<p>The open water that has persisted in the area has allowed many waterfowl to remain in the area for the winter. Of particular note are the many occurrences of <b>Red-breasted Mergansers</b> which continue to be reported into February 2024.</p> <p>On Jan. 1, many members of the OFO, including Cathy Douglas and Dave Milsom, visited the Irish Line Boat Launch site on Chemong Lk and spotted 3 females. The group spotted another at Sandy Point, Pigeon Lake and two more were sighted at Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake.</p> <p>Scott Gibson saw 2 females at Hall Landing, Rice Lk on Jan. 1.</p>

	<p>Ken Fulsang saw 3 on Katchewanooka Lk, Stenner Rd on Jan. 8.</p> <p>A female was seen by Jake Nafziger on Little Lake at Rogers Cove on Jan. 10; a group of 4 were spotted upstream at Millenium Park on Jan. 13 by Connor Thompson.</p> <p>Four birds were seen by Don Sutherland on the Trent River at Asphodel 10<sup>th</sup> Ln.</p> <p>A single female was seen from the boat launch off Preston Is., Trent River east of Hastings on Jan. 12, by Cathy Douglas and Jake Nafziger. Another lone female was seen by Angela Mattos at the Lakefield Waterfront, Jan. 12.</p> <p>Kale Worman noted a lone female on the Otonabee R near Lock 22 on Jan. 15.</p> <p>On Feb. 9, 4 females were seen by Don Sutherland and others on Lake Katchewanooka, end of Stenner Rd, with a flock of Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes.</p> <p>Many people have had the opportunity to see the varying numbers of <b>Red-breasted Mergansers</b> throughout the winter in many of these locations.</p>
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>	<p>The mild winter appears to have allowed many bluebirds to remain in our area. Dave Milsom saw a total of 9 in the Bensfort Corners area, Bailieboro on December 24.</p> <p>On Dec .25, Tim Haan noted one on Asphodel 10<sup>th</sup> Line near Norwood. On Jan. 1, 2 birds were seen by Kim Bennett and Mike Coyne on Cty Rd 2, Bailieboro. The Nicholson Rd, Cty Rd 2, Bailieboro region seems to be a favoured area, as seen by Laurie Healey, Marilyn Hubley on Jan. 2 and many others subsequently through the winter. As well, Marilyn spotted some on Eagleson Ln, Cavan, Jan. 8. They continue being seen in this area.</p> <p>4 birds were seen by Martin Parker on McCamus Line on Jan. 19.</p> <p>Don Sutherland spotted 4 birds on Asphodel 4<sup>th</sup> Ln near River Rd.</p> <p>A group of 6 were seen on David Fife Ln by Cathy Douglas and Marilyn Hubley, Jan. 15.</p> <p>Another group of 7 were spotted on Zion Ln in Millbrook on Feb. 19 by several club members.</p> <p>Bluebirds continue to be seen in and around these various locations throughout the winter.</p>
Jan. 2	<p>A female <b>Redhead</b> was spotted by Matthew Tobey at Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake with a flock of Common Mergansers.</p> <p>Mike Burrell saw a <b>White-winged Scoter</b> at Quarry Bay Beach, Stoney Lake.</p> <p>Two <b>Bonaparte's Gulls</b> were seen on Fisher Dr., Bailieboro by Laurie Healey and Marilyn Hubley.</p> <p>Several immature <b>Golden Eagles</b> were spotted: one on Sandy Lake Rd, Havelock by Chris Risley, Erica Nol and Gary Heuvel; one on Fire Access Rd near Mississaugua Lk by Kim Bennett and Mike Coyne; another on Fire Tre 34, North Kawartha by Tim Haan, Tanya Taylor and Don Sutherland.</p> <p>An adult <b>American Goshawk</b> was also seen by Tim, Tanya and Don on Jack Lake Rd.</p> <p>Cathy Douglas saw a <b>Winter Wren</b> at Squirrel Creek.</p>
Jan. 4	<p>Don Sutherland saw 9 <b>Bonaparte's Gull</b> at Pengelly Landing, Rice Lk.</p> <p>A <b>Carolina Wren</b> was seen by Cathy Douglas on Mill St., Keene. This bird remained at this location, seen and heard by many, until the present.</p>
Jan. 5	<p>Linda Sutherland detected a <b>Barred Owl</b> on Bartlet Rd and saw a <b>Great Blue Heron</b> on Moncrief Ln.</p>

Unknown date	A huge flock of 161 <b>Cedar Waxwings</b> was observed by Lynn Smith in Millbrook. Lynn also saw a <b>Trumpeter Swan</b> at Katchawanooka Lk.
Jan. 7	<p>A female <b>Wood Duck</b> was seen by Angela Mattos at the Lakefield waterfront. This bird continued hanging with a group of Mallards throughout the winter.</p> <p>Marilyn Freeman spotted a <b>Common Goldeneye</b> along the Otonabee River.</p> <p>Bruce Kidd reported a <b>Red-winged Blackbird</b> at feeders on Cty Rd 8, Douro, and Martin Parker saw one at his feeders in west Peterborough. This bird returned to Martin's feeder after a couple of weeks absence.</p> <p>A <b>Rusty Blackbird</b> was seen by Cathy Douglas on Nicholson Rd, Bailieboro.</p> <p>Randy Belcher noted tracks of a single wolf (Eastern Timber Wolf?) and separately, a group of coyotes up in the Kinmount area.</p>
Jan. 8	<p>Steve Paul and Laurie Healey detected a <b>Winter Wren</b> on the Lang-Hastings Trail near Keene Rd.</p> <p>Reem Ali noted a <b>Cooper's Hawk</b> in downtown Peterborough and a <b>Red-tailed Hawk</b> near the zoo.</p>
Jan. 10	<p>A <b>Hermit Thrush</b> was seen by Jim Cashmore on his suet feeder in Peterborough.</p> <p>Cathy Douglas also saw one on Hannah Rd, Bailieboro on Jan 11, and 2 at the Otonabee Gravel Pits. Cathy also saw a <b>Northern Flicker</b> and a flock of <b>Cedar Waxwings</b> at the Hannah Rd site.</p> <p>Marilyn Freeman saw a flock of 10 <b>Cedar Waxwings</b> in Jackson Pk.</p>
Jan. 12	<p>A <b>Redhead</b> was seen by Jake Nafziger and Cathy Douglas on the Trent River at Asphodel 10<sup>th</sup> Ln.</p> <p>Cathy Douglas saw a <b>White-winged Scoter</b> at Old Orchard Rd at Preston Is, Hastings Area.</p> <p>A female <b>Northern Pintail</b> was seen on the Otonabee R between Locks 24 and 25 by Angela Mattos.</p>
Jan. 15	<p>A subadult <b>Golden Eagle</b> was seen flying over at Nephton Ridge by Luke Berg.</p> <p>Dave Milsom reported an <b>American Goshawk</b> at Petroglyphs Park.</p>
Jan. 16	<p>A <b>Cackling Goose</b> was noticed by Cathy Douglas amongst <b>Canada Geese</b>, at Meadowvale Pk.</p> <p>Dave Milsom noted a <b>Red-winged Blackbird</b> at a feeder in Peterborough and John Bick saw one feeding along Moon Line, Nogies Creek.</p> <p>A <b>Common Grackle</b> was seen by Martyn Obbard at a feeder in Lakehurst.</p> <p>Marilyn Hubley and Jane Kroes spotted a juvenile <b>Golden Eagle</b> on Duncan's Line.</p>
Jan. 18	<p>A male <b>Redhead</b> was seen by Don Sutherland on the Trent River at Asphodel 5<sup>th</sup> Line which continued being seen by others through the winter. He also spotted an adult <b>Golden Eagle</b> from Highway 7/115 in Cavan.</p>
Jan. 20	<p>Olivia Maillet and Andrew Brown saw a <b>Red-headed Woodpecker</b> at a feeder in Ennismore. They had noted a successfully breeding pair in this location, last spotted in September. This bird continues to come daily to the feeder.</p>



Jan. 21	A flock of 20 <b>Cedar Waxwings</b> were seen by Tegan Moss flying amongst the trees in the Sherbrooke area in Peterborough.
Jan. 24	Don Sutherland identified a <b>Hermit Thrush</b> on Hutchison Drive, Millbrook. He also saw an <b>Eastern Meadowlark</b> flush from a hayfield near Nicholson Line, Bailieboro.
Jan. 25	Small numbers of male <b>Red-winged Blackbirds</b> were seen by Laurie Healey on Keene Rd and Scott Gibson at his home in Peterborough.
Jan. 26	Scott McKinlay spotted a <b>Hermit Thrush</b> in Cavan Woods.
Jan. 29	A <b>Northern Saw-whet Owl</b> was heard on Hope Mill Rd by Chris Risley and Angela Mattos.
Jan. 30	Tim Haan spotted a female <b>Long-tailed Duck</b> diving near the rail bridge just above Little Lake.
Feb. 1	A <b>Cackling Goose</b> was seen with 2 <b>Trumpeter Swans</b> on Little Lake by Cathy Dueck and others. Laurie Healey saw a <b>Hermit Thrush</b> at her home on Keene Rd.
Feb. 3	Erica Nol spotted the first <b>Turkey Vulture</b> flying over Peterborough. It was being chased by crows.
Feb 5	Another <b>Hermit Thrush</b> was seen by Patrick Kramer at Rotary Park.
Feb. 6	A first-year <b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b> was spotted by Jake Nafziger and many others on Little Lake. Laurie Healey had a <b>Common Grackle</b> appear at her feeder on Keene Rd. Mike Burrell heard <b>Winter Wren</b> singing in his Douro yard. The warm weather brought out many overwintering <b>American Robins</b> . Margaret Eaton noted 3 of them in her tree in the Westmount area of Peterborough.
Feb. 9	A male <b>Canvasback</b> was spotted by Don Sutherland and many others on Katchewanooka Lake, end of Stenner Road.
Feb. 11	Jake Nafziger located a pair of <b>Redheads</b> and a <b>Lesser Scaup</b> on the Trent River near Humphries Ln.
Feb. 15	Cathy Douglas saw 3 <b>Ring-necked Ducks</b> on the Trent River near 5 <sup>th</sup> Ln Asphodel. Martin Parker reported that a <b>White-throated Sparrow</b> has appeared periodically at his feeder near the hospital all winter.
Feb. 16	Kale Worman spotted a <b>Merlin</b> eating a fresh kill, and a <b>Northern Shrike</b> at the Promise Rock Nature Area. Laurie Healey also saw a <b>Merlin</b> on Keene Rd. A <b>Winter Wren</b> was heard near Marsdale Dr., Peterborough by Jake Nafziger. Don Sutherland reported a flock of approximately 80 <b>Snow Buntings</b> in the fields off Douro 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ln.
Feb. 17	Laurie Healey and Amy Semple saw an adult <b>Golden Eagle</b> feeding near the chicken barns on Duncan's Ln. Laurie also heard a <b>Song Sparrow</b> along Duncan's Ln. A <b>Lesser Scaup</b> was seen by Martin Parker at Auburn Reach Park.

Feb. 18	Ken Fulsang saw an immature <b>Golden Eagle</b> soaring overhead at Kawartha Highlands Pk. An <b>American Goshawk</b> was seen on Douro 4 <sup>th</sup> Ln by Cathy Douglas, where she also saw a male <b>Red-winged Blackbird</b> .
Feb. 19	A <b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b> was seen by Mike Coyne and Kim Bennett at the Baxter Creek Golf Club, Fraserville.
Feb. 20	A group of 5 <b>Ring-necked Ducks</b> and 2 <b>Lesser Scaup</b> were seen amongst the <b>Common Goldeneye</b> and the continuing <b>Redhead</b> , along the Trent River at the rail-trail lookout, by Laurie Healey and Marilyn Hubley.
Feb. 21	Two <b>American Goshawks</b> , an adult and an immature, were spotted by Angela Mattos, circling over her Douro yard.




**PFN OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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 Twitter	@PtboNature	 TikTok	peterboroughnature
		 Facebook	Peterborough Field Naturalists

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**Orchid submissions are encouraged!**

The submission deadline for the next issue is Thursday, March 21.

Submissions can be articles, photos, anecdotes, nature book reviews, poems, outing reports, nature news, recommendations, interesting things you've learned or observed about nature etc.

Please send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan at orchid@peterboroughnature.org or mail submissions via post to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7

**Answers to Wetland Quiz**

There are currently eight provincially significant wetlands located within the City of Peterborough. They are:

- Harper Creek
- Jackson Creek
- Jackson Creek East
- Loggerhead Marsh
- Peterborough Airport Wetland Complex
- Nassau Wetland Complex
- Downer's Corners
- Cold Springs/Yankee Bonnet

This information was taken directly from "City of Peterborough Official Plan Update Natural Heritage System Background Report" released by Beacon Environmental Limited in November 2021.

The wetland in the quiz photo is the Cold Springs/Yankee Bonnet wetland, which is situated along Lang-Hastings Trail between Technology Road and Keene Road.

# Membership Application Form

Memberships may be  
obtained by mailing this  
completed form to:

Peterborough Field Naturalists  
PO Box 1532  
Peterborough Ontario K9J 7H7



**PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS**

Contact Information:			
Name(s):		Phone(s):	
Address:		Email(s):	
I would like to receive The Orchid by (pick one): <input type="checkbox"/> Mail Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Both			
Membership type and fee schedule:			
<b>Notice:</b> Membership fees provide only a small part of the funds required to operate the Peterborough Field Naturalists. Donations from members like you help us offer a diverse range of programming for everyone. Please consider including a donation with your membership so that we can continue to serve you and the Peterborough community. <b>Please make cheques payable to Peterborough Field Naturalists.</b> For E-Transfer go to <a href="https://peterboroughnature.org/membership/join-online/">https://peterboroughnature.org/membership/join-online/</a>			I have included a donation with my membership fees: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes or <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, amount: \$ _____
1. Single Adult \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Single Student or Youth \$15 <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Family \$40* <input type="checkbox"/>			
* Please give the names and ages of children wishing to enroll in the Junior Field Naturalists:			
Name		Age	
<<< New Member Information >>>			
Main interests:			How do you hope to participate?
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Reptiles and Amphibians <input type="checkbox"/> Botany <input type="checkbox"/> Birds <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Life <input type="checkbox"/> Geology <input type="checkbox"/> Insects <input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals Other: _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Outings <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Science <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Junior Naturalists
Volunteers are always needed. Are you interested in any of these activities?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Join the PFN Board <input type="checkbox"/> Sit on research or conservation committees <input type="checkbox"/> Lead an outing <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Work on field projects <input type="checkbox"/> Help with the Orchid publication <input type="checkbox"/> Help the junior naturalists <input type="checkbox"/> Give a presentation			
Liability Waiver (New and Returning Members):			
In consideration of the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) accepting this application, I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever release and discharge the PFN, their officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising from my participation in PFN activities, whether by reason of negligence of the PFN or its representatives, or otherwise. I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required for field trips or other activities in which I participate and accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation. As a member of the PFN and/or as a parent / guardian of a member under 18 years of age, I have read and understood the above, and accept its term on behalf of all my underage children.			
Signature: _____		Date: _____	





# Junior Naturalist News

peterboroughnature.org

email: juniors@peterboroughnature.org

March 2024

Welcome Spring  
with

## NATURE PUPPETS!

Design & make your own **Nature Sock Puppet** using materials inspired by nature. Bring your puppets to life with professional puppetry techniques and then introduce them to the other participants with some fun puppet improv to welcome spring!

The workshop will be led by Shelley King; puppeteer, arts educator & nature lover!

**DATE:** Sunday, April 7th

**TIME:** 3:30pm to 5:00pm

**LOCATION:** Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough

### REGISTRATION:

Contact Shelley King at juniors@peterboroughnature.org. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Early Signs of Spring Challenge

March is a magical month of transition from winter to spring. There is so much to do and see as the natural world comes to life.

Our challenge to you, is to explore 1 new nature area you've never visited before, during the month of March. There are so many to choose from!

- Otonabee Conservation lists 12 Conservation Areas to explore
- Kawartha Land Trust has 8 Public Access Trails in and around Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes
- 26 trails are listed for Peterborough County on the Ontario Nature Trails website
- Check out the Park Locator for Ontario Provincial Parks

Grab your nature journal, pens & pencils, water bottle, rubber boots, trail snack, and binoculars (if you have some) and enjoy exploring all that March has to offer!





# PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

*invites you to attend its*

## **83rd Annual Meeting (AGM), Wed. March 27, 2024**

*Join us in person for Light Refreshments, Social Hour with old and new friends, have fun and help fundraise with our Silent Auction and Bucket Draws.*

*(Note, the Business portion and Guest Speaker will be available via Zoom at no charge)*

**Location:** Peterborough Golf & Country Club

**Social Hour:** 6:30 – 7:30 pm

(light refreshments/ cash bar)

**Admission:** \$15 per person

**Business Meeting:** 7:30 – 8:00 pm

**Featured Speaker:** 8:15 – 9:15 pm

**Purchase Tickets by end of day Monday March 18, 2024 via CanadaHelps**

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/peterborough-field-naturalists/events/peterborough-field-naturalists-83rd-agm/>



### **PFN AGM Featured Speaker: Josh Feltham** ***Community-Based Conservation for Wildlife Monitoring***

Josh Feltham is a conservation biologist and Professor/Coordinator of the Ecosystem Management Program at Fleming College. Josh will entertain and educate us on his community-based conservation efforts afield, including Costa Rica, Guyana and, locally, with Map Turtles on Peterborough's Ston(e)y Lake. Josh will discuss the importance of community engagement in successful conservation and restoration efforts.

In conjunction with the AGM, check out our **Third Annual Online Silent Auction fundraiser**. New or Previously loved items donated by members and supporters of the PFN. The Auction will run for 9 days prior to the AGM. Check it out at [www.32auctions.com/PFN-AGM-Auction2024](http://www.32auctions.com/PFN-AGM-Auction2024)